

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

The California Highway Patrol is a law enforcement and traffic safety agency reporting to Business, Transportation and Housing Agency Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet and Governor Gray Davis.



CONTACT: OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
(916) 657-7202
(916) 657-8639 - FAX

July 2, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

03-28

CHP TO LAUNCH MAJOR CRACKDOWN ON DRUNK DRIVERS

Officers To Provide Free Phone Calls For Drivers Who Have Been Drinking

(SACRAMENTO) The Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol announced today a major crackdown on drunk and drugged drivers. "All available officers will be on the road this holiday weekend. They will especially be looking for drunk drivers," said CHP Commissioner D.O. "Spike" Helmick.

As an added incentive, CHP officers for the first time will be giving away free phone cards. The cards are to be used by motorists to call a friend, family member or a taxicab to take them home if they have been drinking. "There is no longer any excuse for someone to get behind the wheel of a vehicle after they have been drinking," said Commissioner Helmick.

The phone cards will be handed out at various designated driver events, especially those aimed at teen drivers. The cards and officer overtime for the DUI crackdown are funded by a federal grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety.

The DUI statistics have been steadily creeping upward over the past five years in California. In 1997, 1,100 people were killed in alcohol-involved crashes in California. In 2001, that number had risen to 1,308. One third of the people killed in traffic crashes were in alcohol involved wrecks. Last July 4th weekend, CHP officers arrested 1,694 people for DUI, an increase of over 200 from the previous July 4th holiday.

The effort being launched today is the beginning of an historic, two-year campaign by the CHP to reverse the DUI trends in California. “Californians have a choice. Be smart and heed our message. Or be dumb and go to jail,” stated Commissioner Helmick.

The CHP effort is part of a nationwide anti-DUI campaign called “You Drink, You Drive, You Lose.”

#